

MR. ROBERT BEUTEL, BAY CITY, MICHIGAN.

INTERVIEWED BY

WM. WAKEHAM AND RICHARD RATHBUN,

AUGUST 28, 1894.

Business
(Has a fishing establishment on the bank of the river in West Bay City).

P. distrib No. season
We do not do any fishing in the bay outside of Caseville. There are no pounds fished in the bay at present. There are at least 150 pound nets fished in the bay during the season. They are fished spring and fall. They take in all the shore between Tawas and Caseville and there are some off the Charity Islands.

Fykes
The hoop nets are fished in the river and a very few in the bay. They would be in not over 4 feet of water and within 50 rods of the shore. They are fished around Neam-

Jykes.

con and at Rifle River and Pine River. But probably there are not 10 nets altogether. They fish some at Quanicassee River, just to the east of Bay City. Those 10 nets do not include those in the river. They catch bull-heads, perch, sunfish, suckers and pike in them. Do not catch any yellow pickerel in them. They take what they call the mud bass, which is a species of the black bass. Their mouth is a little larger than the black bass, and it is probably the big mouthed black bass. They get a good price for them. Can wholesale them for from 8 to 10 cents.

bullheads
perch
sunfish
suckers
Eels
no walleye

Seines
Hooks

There are no seines fished in the bay, ^{Misc} _{Appar} and no commercial hook and line fishing to speak of. No winter hook and line fishing. They used to spear a good deal in the winter but now there is but very little done and last winter there was practically no spear-
ing. Practically all the fishing in the

Spears

All P.
mainly

bay is pound net fishing. They would take pickerel and trout with the spears,--large ones weighing 20 or 25 lbs.

P.
descrip

The pots of the pound nets are all the same size. We use a 3 inch bottom for the pot and the sides are 2 1-2. The leader and heart are 5 and 6 inch. Most of the leaders we use are about 80 rods. The pot is about 32 feet square. Some fish as high as 10 nets in a string. Gillingham has 30 nets in a string, but most of them do not fish over 10. On the Little Charities we fish in about 30 feet depth for the outside pot, and the inside one commences in about 10 feet. Truedel says the outside pots fish the best. I think he has gravelly bottom.

inner & outer pots

I believe there are more pounds now than 10 years ago. The pound net fishing began before my time here.

no,

history

F.
Season

I begin to fish in the spring just as soon as the ice goes out, sometimes about the first of April. If we get out by that time we feel satisfied, and sometimes we get out before that time. When you can get out in one place in the bay you can get all over, because we have to wait for the ice to move. Sometimes, if it is a soft winter, it will open up in March; and we got fishing March 25 last year, but it froze up on us April 5. There is once in a while a net set before the ice is gone, but as a rule they wait until it is all out. Our last nets at the Charities came out about July 4. The bay fishing quit the last 2 or 3 years about the first of June. They put them in again about the first of September, but there are no fish brought to market until September 15 or 20. We fish until about November 25, at the latest.

P.
catfish
herring
walleye
perch
trout
Herring

Our principal fish are the herring, pickerel, perch, and whitefish, but the latter are not so common. Get a few trout.

The herring come in all through the bay. The herring here are larger than the Green Bay herring and smaller than the Lake Erie herring. They will go about 3 to 2 lbs. or 2 to 1 lb. on an average. We begin to get the herring November 1, and get them in the spring also. As a rule we do not get them in the spring before April 10. Would not get them in the fall before the first of October. The principal herring fishing is in October and November.

Walleye

The first fish we take in the spring are pickerel. We get the pickerel all the season. Get them when we first begin to fish and take them up to July and then get them again in the fall. Our principal pickerel fishing is in the spring as soon as

we can get our nets in.

Perch

The perch are caught all the time, except late in the fall when the herring come on we do not get as many perch. Get more perch in the warm season.

Suckers.

In the last few years we have marketed suckers pretty well and they are abundant about all times. They run more with the perch.

*walleye
sauger*

We get only the yellow pickerel here. *walleye*
Get a very few sand pickerel and in the last year or two they have seemed to be increasing. I think it is the same sand pickerel they have in Lake Erie.

bass.

We get a few black bass in June. In 100 lbs. of fish would run across 1 or 2 bass. We get them in September to some extent.

Cat

Get the catfish during the spring when the warm weather sets in, and again in the

fall. They are quite abundant. We call them channel cat. We have only the one kind. We get the bull-heads in the marshy places in the lake and in the river.

Bullheads,

Get very few sturgeon. In fact they are decreasing every year, but they were abundant in the bay at one time. I do not suppose we got 25 all last spring. I think the Saginaw Bay Fish Co. get more.

Sturgeon

There are no white bass to speak of, but we used to have quite a few of them 8 or 10 years ago. Used to get them as high as 200 lbs. at a time to a boat. We get the calico bass here some, but they are mostly river fish. We get a few rock bass, but they are river fish.

W. bass,

Calico bass,

rock "

Get quite a few sheepshead, but they do not bring them into the market at all. We tried some last year, but before we got them marketed they ate up all there was in them.

S. sheepshead

ling

Get a few lawyers, but do not bring them in either.

Esos

We get quite a few grass pike in the pound nets. They are caught in shallow water and marshy places. Would get some in clear water, but not many. Get very few maskinonge, and in fact none.

maskinonge

trout

I do not suppose we had 1000 lbs. of lake trout last fall. We catch them at the Charities. Do not get them inside of the Charity Islands to speak of.

G. carp

buffalo

We run across a few German carp, but nothing to speak of. We get some buffaloes, and years ago used to get more of them, and get quite a few now. Get no moon-eyes to speak of. Get quite a few buffaloes in the fall. Mr. Trudell at the Charities got about 10 tons during last season, in the months of October and November, 17,000 lbs. in October and 3,000 in November. They get

mooney

some at Big Charity, Point Lookout and Tawas, and get some at the head of the bay. At the falls where there is clear water, we get quite a few at the head of the bay, but only in the fall. At the Charities we get more in the spring than fall.

Get no menominees to speak of, and no blue fins or long jaws.

I think the fisheries are falling off, everything except herring, which I think are on the increase. I do not think perch have fallen off, and, if anything, they are on the increase. Suckers are falling off some, but not much. Perch, suckers and herring are on the increase you might say. Whitefish have fallen off very much. I do not know as they ever got many trout in this bay.

The pickerel are falling off some every year. We do not notice it so much except

*Menominee
blue fins
long jaws*

*Fish decreasing
herring
perch*

Suckers

*W.F.
decrease*

*Walleye
decrease*

Figures

in the spring. For the last 3 years we have had very unfavorable weather. We get the most of them when they are spawning, but would have a big blow come up for the last 3 years and drive them out of the bay when they were spawning. The decrease is the result of excessive fishing, and allowing No.2 pickerel to be marketed. That would be pickerel less than 1 lb. round. We do not dress pickerel at all. Early in the season New York buys heavily of us, but after that we look to the southern markets, St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, etc.

My opinion in regard to this bay is to *Figure* protect the pickerel, and also the whitefish. They are the only ones we care about protecting. There are two ways of protecting them. Of course as dealers we want the business to go on as much as ever, but whether it would be policy to stop us from

*Protect
n.f. & walleye*

close season

catching them during the spawning season is a question. I do not know whether it would pay us to fish after that time. The other way is to stop us from catching the small pickerel. I do not know as we would feel it very much to protect the small ones. We get the bulk of the small ones in the rivers. They fish clear up to the headwaters of the river above Saginaw. They fish pound and hoop nets up the river. The pickerel run up the river in the spring and spawn both in the river and bay. I think to stop catching the number 2 pickerel would be a good way of protecting them. I would do it by not allowing any to be brought to market.

I do not know as we could regulate the mesh as our herring industry is 2-3 of the fishery in the fall. We use just as small herring as we can dress, but we never get very small ones. In June or the first of

Regulate size

walleye
distribution
movements

P. fishes
River

Regulate
size

P.
regulating mesh
herring

July we usually get some small ones. Would consider about 6 or 8 inches a small herring. The increase of the herring is due to the fact probably that they breed more rapidly than any other fish.

*up
min. size*

The smallest whitefish that should be marketed should not be less than 1 lb. after they are dressed, and 1 1-4 lb. might be small enough. In the spring we get quite a few No.2 whitefish. According to our books we get the most of the whitefish in October, and when the herring come on they drive away the whitefish so some say. We do not find schools of different fish running together.

season

*association
with herring*

walleye

*perch
suckers*

In the fall when pickerel are running there is but one kind together. Some years we will get more perch, other years suckers, and other years No.2 pickerel. Outside of the Charities and around Port Austin they do

Fr. gen

not get many pickerel. Our pickerel are mostly confined to inside of the Charities. They get herring outside, however.

We cannot fish larger than 2 1-2 inch mesh (pounds) for herring. We use about the same leader for herring that we do for whitefish, and the big leader does not seem to stop them. Take one man just beyond another for herring fishing and the second man seems to get just as many as the first one. I do not suppose if they saw the leader stuck up that they would try to get through it.

We do not leave any space between the inner end of a leader and the next following pot when set in strings. We have no trouble from the vessels as the water is too shallow. The navigation people do not complain at all.

We have had no trouble from sawdust here in the bay. They do not dump any sawdust

*herring
disturb.*

*Pot mesh &
herring*

leader

*P.
descrip*

navigation

sawdust

here. In my experience we have had no trouble from that cause. They have been using it for fuel and building docks, etc., ever since I can remember. At Alpena they have a swift current, but here it is almost dead. In the spring there is quite a current, but the mills do not get to running until the current gets down pretty well. The mills do not run in the winter.

Coys
bark
We have more or less trouble from the rafts. But these large rafts they have been bringing in for the last year or two do not bother us much as they bring them in mostly in the summer. Some fishermen complain of the bark at the Charities. The bark does not get into the pounds to do any damage.

mill refuse
Sewage
They do not throw any slabs, etc., over at all. Our water is a little dirty early in the spring from the city sewage, but that is

about all.

Offal

Our city scavenger used to take all the offal away, and make phosphate, and we used to carry it back here a good deal and bury it. Of course some goes into the water, but as a rule we never throw anything over. Sometimes they will throw over half a barrel or so at a time. I do not suppose they should throw any offal into the water. Our herring are all dressed ashore, and, in fact, no offal goes into either the bay or river. All the whitefish are dressed ashore. The herring are dressed at the fishing places along the shores and they dump them on the land there.

There is nothing but fishermen's huts at ^{a few} the Charities. You could go to Bay Port or Point Lookout to study the fish. I think they bring all their fish to Bay Port to dress them (from the fisheries in that

*Charities
Bay Port,
accommodations*

vicinity). There are hotels at Bay Port in the fishing season and probably you could get accommodations at Point Lookout.

If they stop us fishing until after the spawning season it is a question whether it would pay us to go to fishing after that, but ultimately it would be a good thing.

The bulk of the pickerel are through spawning by the 10th of April. We will catch pickerel in the upper part of the bay until about June 10. Gillingham catches them up to about the first of July. We get what we call the second run of pickerel that come on after the spawning fish are through. Generally pickerel are through spawning by April 10 or 15. Good fishing would continue, however, until May 10th or 15th, and then it gets pretty light until the first or middle of June. We get the second run of male pickerel following about 10 or 15 days after the females are gone.

Close season
effect

Walleye
Spawning
movement
season

Walleye

*Herring
Nov.*

The herring spawn all over the bay.

Their spawning season is about the fore part of November.

*W. V.
spawning*

The whitefish spawn around the Charities. They spawn all over the bay, but that is their principal spawning ground in November.

*Throw small
fish over*

If there was no market for the small *fish* or no one allowed to handle them they would have to throw the small fish overboard. I think they would throw them over alive and in good condition if they were fined a few times. They could not bring them ashore very well and would throw them over between lifts.

*Fishermen
return spawn*

I do not think the fishermen generally would take the spawn from the whitefish and fertilize it and deposit it again. If they had lots of work on their hands they would probably neglect it. Possibly if they would let them off with that the most of

then would do it, but others would not take the trouble. When the weather was favorable so they could, no doubt they would do it, but when the weather got rough and they could not do it very conveniently they would not bother with it. Fishermen do not like to go out of their line of work. There is no direct income from it, and they would say "I am not getting any pay for this", and that would be about the size of it.

We do not take as many fish as we used to years ago. Take it during the year and I do not know but that Saginaw handles more fish than they did 10 or 12 years ago, but then we did not market these certain classes of fish. We take more herring than ever. Take less pickerel altogether, and take more of these soft fish, perch, suckers, etc.

We usually pay 1 cent a lb. for perch. We do not usually make a practice of buying suckers except in the winter. For herring

*Fish
decrease*

*herring
walleye
perch
suckers*

*Fish
perch
suckers
herring*

we do not pay over 1-2 cent dressed. Last year we paid 90 cents per 100 lbs. The term soft fish includes perch, suckers, etc. We call them soft because they do not bring as good a price as other fish. Our hard fish are pickerel, whitefish and grass pike. Grass pike are a soft fish in regard to keeping, but they bring a good price. Herring are herring and sturgeon are sturgeon, (they call them neither hard nor soft). The soft fish are the herring and perch practically. We sell dressed herring fresh for 1 1-2 cents. Small whitefish run with the big whitefish in the spring, and not with the herring. We do not calculate to get over 3 cents per lb. for frozen herring here. I think the herring would go probably 2 or 3 to a lb. Lake Erie herring run almost half a lb. apiece.

There are not enough sturgeon to attempt

Soft fish
perch
suckers etc.

Hard fish
walleye
w. p.
Esox.

Herring
sturgeon

Herring
pike

co. f. as above
with herring

Herring
pike
size

Sturgeon.

to increase them. The only thing to do would be to stop catching them for a while. The sturgeon are worth a good deal. The meat is worth as much as any other fish and the caviar is valuable.